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Mayor J. B. Billard of Topeka, one of the candidates for the Democratic nomination for Governor, has been doing some effective work for Senator Hodges in the last few days. His assistance during the campaign will be of great benefit to the cause.

Every Democratic candidate for Congress is spending his whole time now in the field in the campaign. Not only that, but every one of the eight candidates expects to devote all his time to the campaign from now until election day. The candidates are an energetic bunch of men and promise to cover their territory pretty thoroughly before the election.

Although the campaign is yet in its early stages, the interest manifested in every portion of the state is great, and the public speakers are never compelled to speak before small audiences. The people of Kansas, it is believed, have been aroused and are making inquiries that they may know what they are doing on election day. Such a state of affairs means much in the warfare for the success of the Democratic party—the party of the common people.

The Hon. Jerry Botkin has been secured by the Democratic State Committee as a speaker during the campaign. He began making two speeches a day on Wednesday of this week at Clay Center. He is a well known Democratic speaker, being considered one of the strongest in the state. He will spend all the time until the close of the campaign in a speaking tour of the state under the auspices of the Committee. Mr. Botkin spoke at Holton Thursday, Oskaloosa Friday, and will speak at Salina Saturday of this week.

Lectures that are pouring in to Democratic headquarters at Topeka, indicate that Democrats everywhere are entirely satisfied with the state ticket, and that they will "vote 'er straight" at the polls in November. That the price of Democratic success is Democratic unity is recognized in all quarters, and the Democrats intend to allow no such bright opportunity as is presented to them this year slip by. With a strong state ticket that is giving satisfaction everywhere there seems to be little likelihood of anything approaching a split in the solid Democratic vote.

The Carpet From Bagdad

By HAROLD MAC GRATH

Author of

"The Best Man," "The Man on the Box," Etc.

Illustrations by Kettner

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

"No, I don't suppose it would. I've an idea that we're all on the way to the home of Haroun-al-Rashid."

"Bagdad," musingly.

"It's the rug. But I do not understand you in the picture."

"No more do I."

With a consideration that spoke well of his understanding, he did not speak to her again till food was passed. Later, when the full terror of the affair took hold of her, she would be dreadfully lonely and would need to see him near, to hear his voice. He forced some of the hot soup down Rynne's throat, and was glad to note that he responded a little. After that he looked about the strange camp, but was careful to get in no one's way. Slyly he took note of this face and that, and his satisfaction grew as he counted the aftermath of the war. And it had taken five of them, and even then the result had been in doubt up to the moment when his head had gone bang against the stucco. He took a melancholy pride in his swollen ear and half-shut eye. He had always been doubtful regarding his courage; and now he knew that George Percival Algernon Jones was as good a name as Bayard.

The camel-boys (they are called boys all the way from ten years up to forty), having hobbled the beasts, were portioning each a small bundle of tibia or chopped straw in addition to what they might find by grazing. Funny brutes, thought George, as he walked among the kneeling animals: to go five days without food or water, to travel continuously from twenty-five to eighty miles the day! Others were busy with the pack-baskets. A tent, presumably Mahomed's, was being erected upon a clayey piece of ground in between the palms. No one entered the huts, even out of curiosity; so George was certain that the desertion had been brought about by one plague or another. A smaller tent was put up later, and he was grateful at the sight of it. It meant a little privacy for the poor girl. Great God, how helpless he was, how helpless they all were!

An incessant clatter, occasionally interspersed with a laugh, went on. The Arab, unlike the East Indian, is not ordinarily surly; and these seemed to be good-natured enough. They eyed George without malice. The war of the night before had been all in a day's work, for which they had been liberally paid. While he had spent much time in the Orient and had ridden camels, a real caravan, prepared for weeks of travel, was a distinct novelty, and so he viewed all with interest, knowing perfectly well that within a few days he would look upon these activities with a dull, hopeless anger. He went back to the girl and sat down beside her.

"Have you any idea why you are here?"

"No; unless he saw me in the ba-
zars with Horace, and thought to

torture him by bringing me along."

Horace! A chill that was not of the night ran over his shoulders. So she called the adventurer by his given name? And how might her presence torture Rynne? George felt weak in that bitter moment. Ay, how might not her presence torture him also?

He had never, for the briefest space, thought of Rynne and Fortune at the same time. She spoke, apathetically it was true, as if she had known him all her life. The wisest thing he could do was to bring Rynne to a condition where he could explain some parts of the enigma and be of some use. Horace!

"I'm going to have another try at him," he said.

She nodded, but without any particular enthusiasm.

George worked over Rynne for the better part of an hour, and finally the battered man moved. He made an ef-



"For the Simple Reason I Didn't Have It to Give Up."

fort to speak, but this time no sound issued from his lips. At the end of the hour he opened his eyes and smiled. It was more like the grin George had once seen upon the face of a boxer who had returned to the contest after having been flogged half a dozen times.

"Can you hear me?" asked George. Rynne stared into his face. "Yes," thickly. "Where are we?"

"In the desert."

"Which one?"

"Arabian."

Rynne tried to sit up alone.

"Better not try to move. They banged you up at a great rate. Best thing you can do is to go to sleep. You'll be all right in the morning."

Rynne sank back, and George bundled him up snugly. Poor devil!

"He'll pull himself together in the morning," he said to Fortune. "I did not know that you knew him well."

"I have known him for eight or nine years. He used to visit my uncle at

our villa at Mentone." She smiled.

"You look very odd."

"No odder than I feel," with ineffectual attempt to bring together the ends of his collar-band. "I must be a sight. I was in too much of a hurry to get there. Did you eat the soup and fish?"

"The soup, yes; but I'm afraid that it will be some time before I can find the dried fish palatable. I hope my courage will not fail me," she added, the first sign of anxiety she had shown. She was very lonely, very tired, very sad.

It is quite possible that Mahomed, coming over, spoiled a pretty scene; for George had some very brave words upon the tip of his tongue.

"Come," said Mahomed to Fortune. "You will sleep in the little tent. No one will disturb you."

"Good night, Mr. Jones. Don't worry; I am not afraid."

George was alone. He produced one of his precious cigars and lighted it. Then he drew over his feet one of the empty saddle-bags, wrapped his blanket round him, and sat smoking and thinking till the heat of the fire replenished from time to time, filled him with a comfortable drowsiness; and the cigar, still smoking, dropped from his nerveless fingers, as he lay back upon the hard clay and slept. Romance is the greatest thing in the world; but for all that, a man must eat and a man must sleep.

The cold dew of dawn was the tonic that recalled him from the land of grotesque dreams. He sat up and rubbed his face briskly with his hands, drying it upon the sleeve of his coat, as hasty and as satisfying a toilet as he had ever made. There was no activity in camp; evidently they were not going to start early. The cook alone was busy. The fire was crackling, the kettle was steaming, and a pot of pleasant-smelling coffee leaned rakishly against the hot ashes. The flap to Fortune's tent was still closed. And there was Rynne, sitting with his knees drawn up under his chin, his hands clasped about his shins, and glowering at no visible thing.

"Hello!" cried George. "Found yourself, eh?"

Rynne eyed him without emotion.

"When and how did they get you?" George inquired.

"About three hours before they got you. Something in a glass of wine. Dope. I'd have cleaned them up but for that."

"How do you feel?"

"Damned bad, Percival."

"Any bones broken?"

"No; I'm just knocked about; sore spot in my side; kicked, maybe. But it isn't that."

George didn't ask what "that" was.

"Where do you think he's taking us?"

"Bagdad, if we don't die upon the way."

"I don't think he'll kill us. It wouldn't be worth his while."

"You did not give him the rug."

"Not I!"

"It comes hard, Jones, I know, but your giving it up will save us both many bad days. He asked you for it!"

"He did."

"Then why the devil didn't you give it to him? What's a thousand pounds against this muddle?"

"For the simple reason I didn't have it to give up."

"What's that?"

"When I went up to my room, night before last, some one had been there ahead of me. And at first I had given you the credit," said George, with admirable frankness.

"Gone!" There was no mistaking the dismay in Rynne's voice.

"Absolutely."

"Well, I be damn!" Rynne threw aside the blanket and got up. It was a painful movement, and he swayed a little. "If Mahomed hasn't it, and I haven't it, and you haven't it, who the devil has, then?"

George shook his head.

"Jones we are in for it. If that cursed rug is Mahomed's salvation, it is no less ours. If we ever reach the palace of Bagdad and that rug is not forthcoming, we'll never see the outside of the walls again."

"Nonsense! There's an American consul at Bagdad."

"And Mahomed will notify him of our arrival!" bitterly.

"Isn't there some way we two might get at Mahomed?"

"Perhaps; but it will take time. Don't bank upon money. Mahomed wants his head. If the rug . . ."

But Rynne stopped. He looked beyond George, his face full of terror. George turned to see what had produced this effect. Fortune was coming out of her tent. "Fortune? My God!" Rynne's legs gave under and he sank, his face in his hands. "I see it all now! Fool, fool! He's going to get me, Jones; he's going to get me through her!"

CHAPTER XIV.

Mahomed Offers Freedom.

Fortune had slept, but only after hours of watchful terror. The slightest sound outside the tent sent a scream into her throat, but she succeeded each time in stifling it. Once the evil laughter of a hyena came over her ears, shivering. Alone! She laid her head upon the wadded saddle-bags and wept silently, and every sob tore at her heart. She must keep up the farce of being brave when she knew that she wasn't. The men must not be discouraged. Her deportment would characterize theirs; any sign of weakness upon her side would correspondingly depress them the more. She prayed to God to give her the strength to hold out. She was afraid of Mahomed; she was afraid of his grim smile, afraid of his mocking eyes; she could not sponge out the scene wherein he had so gratuitously kicked Horace in the side. Horace!

No, she did not believe that she would ever forgive him for this web which he had spun and fallen into himself. Two things she must hide for the sake of them all: her fear of Mahomed and her knowledge of Rynne's trickery.

What part in this tragedy had the Arab assigned her? Her fingers twined and untwined, and she rocked and rocked, hit her lips, lay down, sat up and rocked again. But for the exhaustion, but for the insistent call of nature, she would never have closed her eyes that night.

And her mother! What would her mother believe, after the scene that had taken place between them? What could she believe, save that her daughter had fulfilled her threat, and run away? And upon this not unreasonable supposition her mother would make no attempt to find out what had become of her. Perhaps she would be glad, glad to be rid of her and her questions. Alone! Well, she had always been alone.

The only ray of sunshine in all was the presence of Jones. She felt, subtly, that he would not only stand between her and Mahomed, but also between her and Rynne.

"Hush!" whispered George. "Don't



"Don't Worry Any More About the Rug, Then. I Know Where It Is."

let her see you like this. She mustn't know."

"You don't understand," replied Rynne miserably.

"I believe I do." George's heart was heavy. This man was in love with her, too.

Rynne struck the tears from his eyes and turned aside his head. He was sick in soul and body. To have walked blindly into a trap like this, of his own making, too! Fool! What had possessed him, usually so keen, to trust the copper-headed devil? All for the sake of one glass of wine!

With an effort entailing no meager pain in his side, he stifled the strangling hiccoughs, swung round and tried to smile reassuringly at the girl.

"You are better?" she asked.

There was in the tone of that question an answer to all his dreams. One night's work had given him his ticket to the land of those weighed and found wanting. She knew; how much he did not care; enough to read his guilt.

It appeared to George that she was accepting the situation with a philosophy deeper than either his or Rynne's. Not a whimper, not a plaint, not a protest so far had she made. She was a Roland in petticoats.

"Oh, I'm bashed up a bit," said Rynne. "I'll get my legs in a day or so. Fortune, will you answer one question?"

"As many as you like."

"How did you get here?"

"Don't you know?"

George wasn't certain, but the girl's voice was cold and accusing.

"I?"

"Yes. Wasn't it the note that you wrote to me?"

Rynne took his head in his hands, wearily. "I wrote you no note, Fortune; I have never written you a note of any kind. You do not know my handwriting from Adam's. In God's name, why didn't you ask your mother or your uncle? They would have recognized the forgery at once. Who gave it to you?"

"Mahomed himself."

"Damn him!" Rynne grew strong under the passing fit of rage. "No, don't tell me to be silent. I don't care about myself. I'm the kind of a man who pulls through, generally. But this takes the spine out of me. I'm to blame; it's all my fault."

"Say no more about it." She believed him. She really hadn't thought him capable of such baseness, though at the time of her abduction she had been inclined to accuse him. That he was here, a prisoner like herself, was conclusive evidence, so far as she was concerned, of his innocence. But she knew him to be responsible for the presence of Jones; knew him to be culpable of treachery of the meanest order; knew him to be lacking in generosity and magnanimity toward a man who was practically his benefactor. "What does Mahomed want?"

"The bally rug, Fortune. And Jones here, who had it, says that it is gone."

"Vanished, magic-carpet-wise," supplemented George.

"And Jones would have given it up."

"And a thousand like it, if we could have bought you out of this."

"Jones and I could have managed to get along."

"We shouldn't have mattered."

"And would you have returned to Mr. Jones his thousand pounds?"

"Yes, and everything else I have," quite honestly.

"Don't worry any more about the rug, then. I know where it is."

"You!" cried the two men.

"Yes. I stole it. I did so, thinking

to avert this very hour; to save you from harm," to George, "and you from doing a contemptible thing," to Rynne. "It is in my room, done up in the big steamer-roll. And now I am glad that I stole it."

Rynne laughed weakly.

Said George soberly: "What contemptible thing?" He remembered Mahomed's words in regard to Rynne as the latter lay insensible in the sand.

Rynne, quick to seize the opportunity of solving, to his own advantage, the puzzle for George, and at the same time guiding Fortune away from a topic, the danger of which she knew nothing, raised a hand. "I bribed Mahomed to kidnap you, Jones. Don't be impatient. You laughed at me when I laid before you the prospectus of the United Romance and Adventure Company. I wished to prove to you that the concern existed. And so here is your adventure upon approval. I thought, of course, you still had the rug. Mahomed was to carry you into the desert for a week, and by that time you would have surrendered the rug, returned to Cairo, the hero of a full-fledged adventure. Lord! what a mess of it I've made. I forgot, next to this bally rug, Mahomed loved me."

The hitherto credulous George had of late begun to look into facts instead of dreams. He did not believe a word of this amazing confession, despite the additional testimony of Fortune, relative to Rynne's statements made to her in the bazars.

"The bitter bitten," was George's sole comment.

Rynne breathed easier.

"Why not tell Mahomed at once, and have him send a courier back for the rug?" suggested Fortune.

"By Jove, that clears up everything. We'll do it immediately." George felt better than he had at any stage of the adventure. Here was a simple way out of the difficulty.

"Softly," said Rynne. "Let us come down to the lean facts. If that rug is in your room, Fortune, your mother has discovered it long before now. She will turn it over to your estimable uncle. None of us will ever see it again, I'm thinking. The Major knows that Jones gave me a thousand pounds for it." Struck by a sense of impending disaster, Rynne began to fumble in his pockets. Gone! Every shilling of it gone! "He's got that, too; Mahomed; the cash you gave me, Jones. Wait a moment; don't speak; things are whirling about some. Over nine hundred pounds; every shilling of it. We mustn't let him know that I've missed it. I've got to play weak in order to grow strong. . . . But they will at least start up a row as to your whereabouts, Fortune."

"No," thoughtfully; "no, I do not think they will."

The undercurrent was too deep for George. He couldn't see very clearly just then. The United Romance and Adventure Company; was that all? Was there not something sinister behind that name, concerning him? He looked patiently from the girl to the adventurer.

Rynne stared at the yellow desert beyond. His brain was clearing rapidly under the stimulus of thought. He himself did not believe that they would send out search-parties either for him or for Fortune. He could not fathom what had given Fortune her belief; but he realized that his own was based upon the recollection of that savage mood when he had thrown down the gauntlet. Now they would accept it. He had run away with Fortune as he had boldly threatened to do. The mother and her precious brother would proceed at once to New York without him. He had made a fine muddle of it all. But for a glass of wine and a grain too much of confidence, he had not been here this day.

Mahomed, himself, astir by this time, came over to the group, leaning on his suspicious eye, but unlike conspirators they made no effort to separate because he approached. He understood: as yet they were not afraid of him. That was one of the reasons he hated white men; they could seldom be forced to show fear, even when they possessed it. Well, these three should know what fear was before they saw the last of him. He carried a kurbash, a cowhide whip, which he twirled idly, even suggestively. First, he came to George.

"If you have Yliordes, there is still a chance for you. Cairo is but fifty miles away. Bagdad is several hundred." He drew the whip carelessly through his fingers.

"I do not lie," replied George, a truculent sparkle in his eyes. "I told you that I had it not. It was the truth."

A ripple of anxiety passed over Mahomed's face. "And you?" turning upon Rynne, with suppressed savageness. How he longed to lay the lash upon the dog!

"Don't look at me," answered Rynne waspishly. "If I had it I should not be here." Ah, for a bit of his old strength! He would have strangled Mahomed then and there. But the drug and the beating had weakened him terribly.

"If I give you the rug," interposed Fortune, "will you promise freedom to us all?"

Mahomed stepped back, nonplussed. He hadn't expected any information from this quarter.

"I have the rug," declared Fortune calmly, though she could scarcely hear her own voice, her heart beat so furiously.

"You have it?" Mahomed was confused. Here was a turn in the road upon which he had set no calculation. All three of them!

"Yes. And upon condition that you liberate us all, I will put it into your hands. But it must be my writing this time."

A white man would have blushed.

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